

**Halifax and Northampton Counties Comprehensive Transportation Plans
Steering Committee Meeting
J. Reuben Daniel City Hall, 1040 Roanoke Avenue, Roanoke Rapids, NC
March 10, 2010 – 10:00 AM**

Attendees

Jason Morris	NCDOT – Division 1, District 2
Dia Denton	Halifax County
Lori Medlin	Halifax County CVB
James Mills	Scotland Neck
Ann Whitley	Peanut Belt RPO
Chris Rountree	Peanut Belt RPO/ Halifax County Planning
Doris Hawkins	Halifax County GIS
Ronnie Keeter	NCDOT – Division 4, District 1
Fannie Greene	Garysburg/ Northampton County
Richard Parnell	Roanoke Rapids
Amanda Jarratt	Roanoke Rapids Planning
Kerry Morrow	NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch
Behshad Norowzi	NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch
Saeed Mohamed	NCDOT – Transportation Planning Branch

Meeting Minutes

Introductions

Kerry Morrow opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Everyone introduced themselves around the room.

Review of December Meeting

Mrs. Morrow passed out a copy of the December meeting minutes and gave the committee members a few moments to review the minutes. The minutes were accepted by the committee as presented.

Northampton County Survey Results

Saeed Mohamed handed out booklets containing the results of the Northampton County Transportation Survey. 65 responses to the survey were received. Mr. Mohamed went over highlights of the survey results with the committee. The overwhelming majority of responders (93.8%) use their own private automobiles for transportation, and another 4.6% ride with others in a private automobile. Safety was cited as a big concern for over half of the responders. He pointed out that traffic problems on US 158 were noted by a large number of survey responders. Truck traffic was a problem for 46% of the responders. 53.7% would like to see sidewalks constructed or improved. Almost half said they would use off-road trails or greenways if they were available, but on 34.4% said they would use on-road bicycle facilities. Over half would consider using transit service around the county.

Economic Development was cited as the most important goal for improving transportation in the county, with better connectivity between the county and I-95 was the second most important. Removing truck traffic came in third place.

In individual comments, traffic problems on US 158 were noted most often. There were many towns identified for sidewalk construction or improvements. While a fair number of people said they would consider using transit, a fixed route would not be feasible in Northampton County.

Draft Highway Recommendations

Halifax County

Mrs. Morrow handed out a list of recommendations and described each one to the committee. The list is attached to the minutes. She said that the US 158 widening is in the Transportation Improvement Program and is moving ahead through the planning phase. One recommendation from the committee at the last meeting was that the 5-way intersection at Hollister needs improvement, and she is recommending that about 1/10 of a mile be added on new location from NC 561 to NC 43 to straighten out the intersection. Recommended for widening were locations along NC 43, US 301, US 258, NC 122, and NC 125.

Mr. Mills said the Roanoke River Mayors are working to use the river for history and nature tourism, not just in Halifax County, but in other counties too. Mrs. Medlin asked what the plan will do for the County, as far as establishing bicycle routes. Mrs. Morrow said the recommendations are for widening the shoulders on designated roads.

Northampton County

Mr. Mohamed handed out the recommendations for Northampton County, based on the survey results and input from the committee members. The list is attached to the minutes. He noted that US 158 was identified as the main problem, and recommendations have been made that are in line with the TIP project. He stated that Division Engineer Bridgers confirmed that no deficiencies exist anywhere in the County except on US 158. He said projections show that I-95 traffic will increase 2% and will be near or over capacity.

Multi-modal Plans

Bike/Pedestrian Plans

Ann Whitley showed the committee a map displaying some initial recommendations for bike routes in Halifax County. She said she will continue to work with local bikers who know the roads to make recommendations. She said a major consideration is the economic benefit to the area that bicycle tourism could provide, especially from large touring groups coming from other regions.

Public Transportation Plan

Mrs. Morrow said she had spoken with Pam Perry, Director of CPTA, and that she advised that fixed routes would not be feasible in the counties. Therefore, a Transit Plan map can't be developed. Mrs. Perry confirmed that.

Roanoke Rapids/Weldon/Gaston/Garysburg Study

Behshad Norowzi gave an update on the Travel Demand Model Study. He described how the model was calibrated and presented the socioeconomic project for the area. Mr. Norowzi said the updated plan was done when Carolina Crossroads was planned. That didn't work out for the present, but it may in the future. NCDOT will re-evaluate

those plans. He said he is finished with the model. A map model of the area was projected on the wall. He said Thelma Road shows that some spots are performing well, and some not. More work is needed before final recommendations.

He said he sent employment information out to some of the committee members to verify and/or comment on the data. When they look at current and projected traffic, they will be able to make recommendations. He said he will send the maps out to committee members and others so they will be able to comment and make recommendations on whether the data seems accurate.

Mr. Norowzi said they need to determine what is a reasonable expectation for growth of the area in the next 30 years. He asked that committee members let him know. He will bring it back to the committee next time.

Next Meeting

Mrs. Morrow said the next meeting will be on a Wednesday at the end of April or the first of May. She will let everyone know the date when it is set.

Closing Notes

There were not further comments and the meeting was adjourned.